



★ Dimi ★

American Girl®

May/June 1994

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On the Stage

*A Springtime Play
Starring You*

In the Air

*Gymnastics
with a Twist*

Around the World

*Traveling
Teddy Bears*

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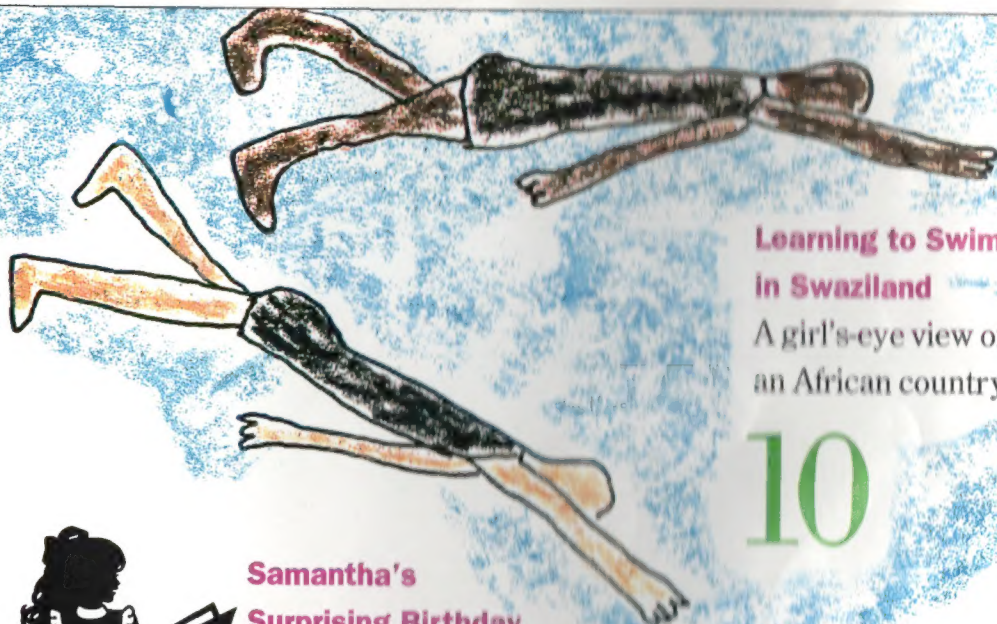
Find and answer the 7 questions hidden throughout the magazine. (Answers to find-its and other puzzlers on page 36.)



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American Girl®

Celebrating Girls, Yesterday and Today

May/June 1994



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On the Cover

Meet Megan McNamara, age 11. Megan's all-time favorite vacation spot is her grandmother's house in Indiana. The house is on a lake, and Megan loves to go there in the summer to swim and play with her cousins. If she couldn't go to her grandmother's, Megan would like to visit Hawaii. She wants to go to a luau, do the hula, and eat roast pig!

Megan McNamara

Letters from You



Kudos

I was so-o-o-o happy when I saw the Mini-Mag in the January/February issue. I'm a new subscriber, and I've heard lots about the Mini-Mag. Maybe you can put one in every other issue. I really enjoyed it!

Dasmari Alvino

Age 11, Kenosha, Wisconsin



Color Me Mad!

I was completely offended by your January/February issue. You had a part about the 1800s and babies. There was a sentence that said, "It's a boy?" In it, you said imagine your brother in this outfit . . . in pink. I think it's pretty sexist to say that. Both of my brothers wear pink, and look good.

Abby Yemm

Age 10, Sterling, Illinois



Cool Read

I read the section about mushing in the January/February issue. Another good book about an Alaskan girl is *Julie of the Wolves*, by Jean Craighead

George. It's not about mushing, but it's sort of related. A girl lives out in the wild and makes friends with some wolves.

Erin Fremain

Age 11, St. Louis, Missouri



Trouble

I'm glad you had *Now Everybody Really Hates Me* in your January/February issue, because just after I finished reading it, I got in trouble. I was reading the magazine when I was supposed to be taking a shower. I felt just like Patty Jane!

Melissa Johnson

Age 9, Virginia Beach, Virginia



Peeking at the Past

I really like the Looking Back articles in the magazine.

They're interesting, and the old pictures let me take a peek at what life was like then. It's like learning what you would in a history museum, but not leaving your own home.

Katie Ray

Age 12, St. Louis, Missouri

American Girl



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Mark Amenta, Polly Athan, Barbara Babcock, Victoria Carlson, Beth Dunlap, Suzi Galloway, John Marchacos, Sally Paulis, Doreen Smith, Robert Travis, Jean Tucker, Patricia Williams



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CUSTOMER SERVICE: 1-800-845-0005. Subscriber: Send change of address information six weeks before moving to: *American Girl*, Dept CA, P.O. Box 620986, Middleton, WI 53562-0986. Send old address label (recent mailing label is best), new address, and new telephone number, or call 1-800-845-0005. Editorial Offices: *American Girl*, Editorial Department, P.O. Box 620986, Middleton, WI 53562-0986. Pleasant Company Publications Incorporated cannot accept liability for loss or damage of photographs or other materials. Unsolicited materials will be returned only if accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. ALL COMMENTS AND SUGGESTIONS RECEIVED BY AMERICAN GIRL BECOME THE SOLE PROPERTY OF AMERICAN GIRL AND MAY BE USED WITHOUT COMPENSATION OR ACKNOWLEDGMENT. The name *American Girl* is a registered trademark owned by Pleasant Company Incorporated; the *American Girl* logo is a trademark owned by Pleasant Company Incorporated; this name and logo cannot be used without the express written consent of Pleasant Company Incorporated. ISBN 1-56247-158-9.

Girls Express



Buzzword

American girls everywhere are using this buzzword.

stupendous

Say it "stoo-PEN-duss"

What it means: amazing or marvelous

One way to use it: "It's going to be a stupendous summer!"

This word appears somewhere in this issue of *American Girl*. Can you find it?



Illustration: Paul Meisel

That's What Friends Are For



Photo: Guy Ambrosino

Pecos kids and their teacher

Friendship is a very special kind of medicine. That's what the sixth-graders at Pecos Elementary School in Pecos, New Mexico, learned when they befriended Whitney Williams, a girl who has AIDS.

The class read about Whitney in a magazine. To raise her spirits, they sent her get-well letters, care packages—even a quilt they made themselves. Whitney wrote back, and a real friendship grew. Then the students raised money for a plane ticket so that Whitney, who lives in Illinois, could visit them.

Knowing Whitney has taught the students a lot. "I learned you can't judge a person by a disease they have," says Jennifer Romero, age 12. Adds twelve-year-old Jackie Martin: "Life is a lot more precious than I'd thought."

Whitney, age 11, has advice for people who know kids with AIDS. "Don't be scared," she says. "Show them you care."





School's Out

Summertime's my favorite time.
It doesn't get dark till after nine.
You don't have to go to school.
Instead you can go to the pool!
There are many sports you can
start playing,
Like tennis, softball, and
roller-skating.
You can ride horseback or go to
the zoo.
But remember, there are many
things to do.
If you watch TV and just sit on
the couch,
There's a 50/50 chance you'll be
a bored grouch!

Rachael Hall
Age 9, Lubbock, Texas



Fancy-Schmancy Envelope Contest

Make your envelopes as exciting as
the letters you send us. Here's how
this new contest works:

- 1** Take a plain white
envelope and address it to us.
- 2** Draw, color, or doodle on it until
it's a piece of postal art! (Make sure
our address is still readable, though.)

3 We'll pick the top designs and
print them in an upcoming issue.

★ Important: Leave the envelope
empty, and put your name, return
address, and age on the back.

The deadline is June 1, 1994.
Happy doodling!

True Story

Dear American Girl,

My name is Shira Lee Pisner. I am ten years old, and I
have four brothers. Other girls may have four brothers,
but I bet not many have four all the same age. That's
right—we're all ten years old, and we're quintuplets!

Being the only girl I get to have my own bedroom. If I
want privacy—and there's not much of that in our house—
I can go to my room. But sometimes I like to sleep in
the same room as one or more of my brothers. It's like
having a built-in slumber party.

I love sports, and I'm good at them. A couple of years
ago, I played on a football team. I was the only girl in
the whole league. But that didn't bother me, because I was
used to playing with a lot of boys.

Because I'm the only girl, I get to do special things
with my mom. One of my favorites is "girls' night out." My
mom, my grandmas, and I meet for dinner someplace fun, and
then my grandmas usually buy me a special treat.

Sometimes I think it might be fun to have a sister. When
I tell my mom and dad that, they get very pale and sit
down. I don't think my chances are too good.
Sometimes I fight with my brothers,
but I really love them. In

fact, I can't
imagine what life
would be like
without them.

Yours truly,
Shira Pisner
Olney, Maryland

Shira, in the middle,
and her happy family



Photo: Rhoda Baer

The Adventures of Traveling Teddy

If Alexis' teddy bear could talk, what a tale he would tell. As part of a summer-camp project, nine-year-old Alexis Stephanopoulos sent her bear on an international journey—with a lot of help from people she didn't know. She tucked her bear and a travel journal into a knapsack,



along with a letter Alexis and bear, reunited

asking whoever met the bear to keep him traveling. Then she gave the knapsack to a friend who was going to San Francisco. The bear was off!

In San Francisco, Alexis' friend gave the bear to someone going to Hawaii. That person passed the bear to someone *else*, and so on. When the bear returned in two months, he had traveled all over the world! The journal told how he sat on a beach in Hawaii, saw kangaroos in Australia, and met sumo wrestlers in Japan.

Alexis' favorite souvenir? Italian baby food. "It had the Gerber baby on it, but the words were in Italian!"

Alexis' bear brought home goodies from all over the globe.

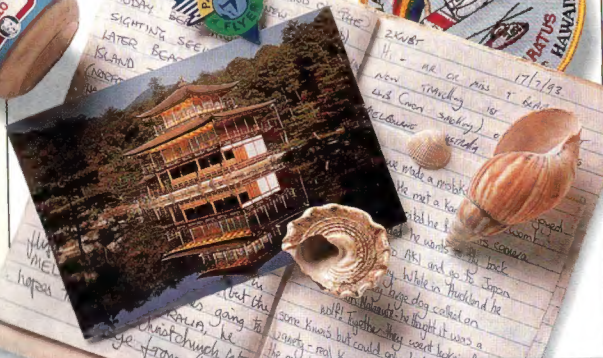


Photo: Mike Walker

Miss AG Bear Takes a Trip

Meet Miss AG Bear—our very own traveling teddy. We've sent a bear just like her to four different readers, along with a travel journal. Each girl will send her bear on a journey, like Alexis did. In May, all the bears will return to *American Girl*. Next fall we'll fill you in on all their *beary* exciting adventures.

These girls helped us send Miss AG Bear on her way:

Molly Taylor
Somerville, Massachusetts

Brooke Meyers
Shonto, Arizona

Marina Hart
Evanston, Illinois

Stephanie Pander
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

A.G.'s

POLL



Your answers:

In the January/February issue we asked where you would most like to go on vacation. The top five answers show that a lot of you were dreaming of sunshine and beaches (not to mention Disney theme parks). The big five:

1. Hawaii
2. Florida
3. France
4. California
5. Australia

Rounding out the top ten were Alaska, England, Africa, New York, and Italy.

Next question:

Do you have a collection?

☐ yes ☐ no

What do you collect?

Tell us about it.



Cut out your answers and mail them to us.



Correction

We gave the incorrect names of the authors of two poems recently printed in *American Girl*. "The Month of December," in November/December, was written by Aileen Fisher. "Sudden Storm," in March/April, was written by Elizabeth Coatsworth.

Write to Us!

Send your responses to questions in *Girls Express* to the address below. Include your name and AGE.

American Girl

Girls Express



8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562

Deadline: Answers from this issue should be in by June 1, 1994.

Help Wanted!

We're looking for stories about girls who've been especially kind and understanding to others. Do you know a girl who stood up for someone who was being teased? Or a girl who played a special game with her little brother just because he was feeling lonely?



Tell us all about her. What's her name and what has she done? Use your own paper if you need more room.

Cut out your answers and mail them to us.



Letters Home

AG readers in faraway lands

Find other countries are different, but grand!



"In England, I've had some very funny experiences because of the different words that people use. Once someone asked me what I was eating, and I said 'a peanut-butter-and-jelly sandwich.' The person looked confused. Then I found out that in England 'jelly' is the name for Jell-O! No wonder she was confused."

Erin Roberts

Age 11, Shrewsbury, England



"My home is decorated with Mexican ornaments made of wood and clay. My favorite food is tacos because there are so, so, so many combinations. And they all taste good!"

Susana Odriozola Canales

Age 13, Monterrey, Mexico



"The best thing about Holland is playing Dutch soccer. My team has little get-togethers. In December we have a Sinter Klaus (Saint Nicholas) party. He puts gifts in good children's wooden shoes."

Jennifer Dasher

Age 13, Soesterberg, Netherlands





"In Indonesia, people sometimes go on a 'hash.' That's when some-

one sets a trail through the jungle, and people try to follow it without getting lost. On my first hash, I walked past a water buffalo that I thought was tied to a tree. He started running straight for me! My mom and I screamed and ran in opposite directions. My nickname became 'Fast' Lane!"

Alexis Lane

Age 11, Sumatra, Indonesia



"I was surprised that a lot of the people in Germany speak English.

They're very understanding if you mispronounce a German word, and they try to help you. They want you to help them with their English, too! Living in Europe has helped me see that people of other nations are just like us. They may look or talk differently, but we are all people."

Amanda Kaminski

Age 13, Binsfeld, Germany



"In France, I went to see *La Belle et la Bête*, which is

Beauty and the Beast. We got popcorn, and instead of salt it was sprinkled with sugar! I thought it was terrible, but the French like it that way."

Megan Doherty

Age 8, Clermont-Ferrand, France



"The most surprising

thing about Saudi Arabia is that it's not all desert. We live in a compound called Al Bustan Village. Al Bustan means 'the garden' in Arabic. There are trees by the side of the road. We even have grass!"

Susan Molnar

Age 11, Al-Khubar, Saudi Arabia

An American girl named Nila Leigh wrote a book about living in Swaziland. Turn to page 10 for her story.

To:
American
Girls



The Jitters

This month *American Girl* went to Massachusetts to ask fourth-grade girls how they deal with **stage fright**.

These girls go to Crocker Farm School in Amherst, Massachusetts.



Paulina You can get the jitters when you're onstage performing something. It sort of feels like you have butterflies in your stomach.



Sarah When my class sang songs at the school assembly, I was nervous because we had to do the performance two times. I was also nervous because of all the people in the audience. I felt like I didn't know how I was going to look, and I might mess up.



Tosin Sometimes when you have the jitters, you want to talk but you're too nervous.



Sarah If I try to say something, my mouth shakes like it doesn't want to say it! And I feel a coldness go down my spine. Sometimes I feel like smiling or laughing.



Carolyn I feel like biting my nails. And my legs get shaky.



Monica I was worried the whole week before I was in the *Nutcracker* ballet. I was afraid someone would trip and fall, and then we'd get embarrassed and forget what we were supposed to be doing.



Sarah One song we sang at assembly had a Chinese dragon monster in it. I thought I might start laughing. The monster's head fell off, and I *did* start laughing, but I got control of myself.



Monica If I don't have something to do before I perform, I just sit there worrying. Before the *Nutcracker*, my mom was there. We played games and had snacks, so I had something to do.



Paulina If you're nervous about having to do something in front of people, you can try practicing at home.



Melissa You should try to ignore what's making you nervous and act normal.



Monica I've been in the *Nutcracker* three times. It got easier after the first time. I felt more secure. I knew where to go and what to do.



Sarah At our concert, our music teacher said if we didn't look at the audience and looked at her when we sang it would help. And it did. Also, once in a while, if I got nervous I'd squeeze my toes. It just sort of calmed me down.



Tosin I pretend everyone in the audience is my parents. I'm never afraid of my parents.



Monica If I have stage fright, I think of all the audience in their underpants! If you think of them in their underpants, with little hearts or fire engines on them, it's funny. They're funny! And you calm down a little bit.

Tips for Calming the Jitters

1

If you're nervous about speaking in front of your class:

Practice beforehand. If you have to give an oral book report, read it *out loud* at home. Try it in front of a mirror. Get used to the sound of your voice. The more prepared you are, the more relaxed you'll be when you have to get up in front of the class.

2

If you're jittery before a play or recital:

That's called stage fright, and even the most famous actresses and musicians get it before big performances. Instead of worrying about what people in the audience are thinking, think only about what *you're* there to do. Walk out onto the stage and concentrate on your job, and you'll do very well.

3

If sports have you shaking in your sneakers:

The jitters are really just extra energy. If you're edgy before you get up to bat or before the big race, it can actually turn out to be a good thing. Your nervous energy can turn into physical energy, and that can help you hit the ball harder or run faster!

4

What to do when the jitters hit:

Try to act calm. Take a couple of deep breaths and exhale slowly—that will help you relax. And remember that while you may know your knees are shaking and your mouth is dry, chances are no one else can tell. ★

Learning to Swim

When Nila Leigh went to Africa, she wrote lots of letters to her classmates back in New York City. Later, those letters were made into a real book! The story you see here is part of Nila's book.

When I was eight my mom and dad took me to live in Swaziland. It's a tiny African kingdom and this is how you get there.



in Swaziland

by Nila K. Leigh



A few facts about SWAZILAND

It is surrounded by South Africa on three sides and by Mozambique on one side.

It is smaller than New Jersey but sort of round.

It is ruled by a King.

It does not have a beach.

It is south of the equator.

There are no lions.



Here are some things that happen when you cross the equator.



Winter is in June and July.

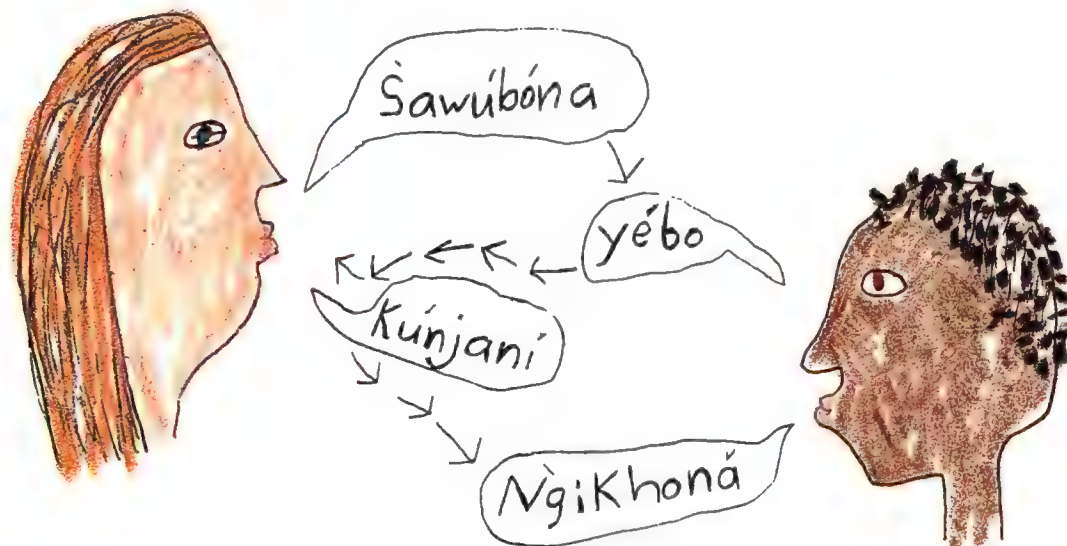
Summer is in December and January.



Bathtub water goes down the drain different ways.

There are two official languages in Swaziland, English and siSwati.

If you go to Swaziland here's what to say when you meet a friend.



Village children walk to school.



Sometimes very far. Sometimes more than an hour. See where they walk?

The way it is in



is all around.

the background is the way it

School starts at 8:00 a.m. and ends at 1:00 p.m. Before school begins everyone stands outside and sings.

Most schoolrooms have one teacher and 25 to 50 children.

Swazi children help their parents a lot. Girls wash clothes, fetch water and take care of babies, which are wrapped in cloth and carried on the back.

Here is how you do it.

Me



My baby

Cloth tied around waist



Oops! (Cats are not babies.)

Here is a Swazi family
at home. Most houses
are made of mud

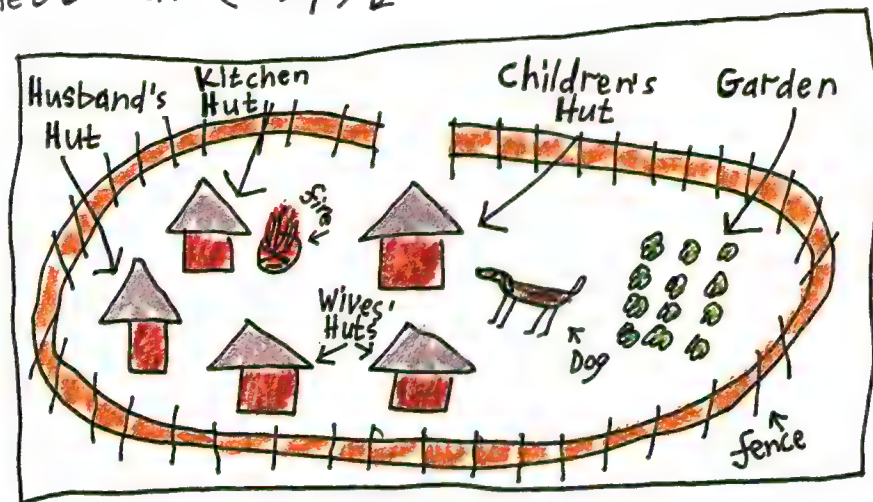


stone, sticks,

straw or cement blocks.

Roofs are tin or straw.

If you see a group of huts bunched
together in the bush it is called a
homestead. (Map) ↓



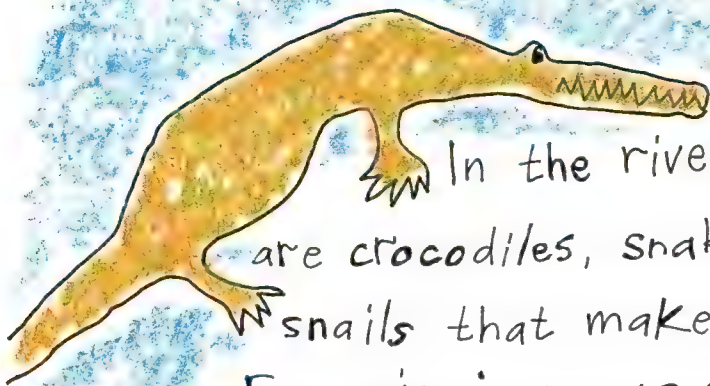
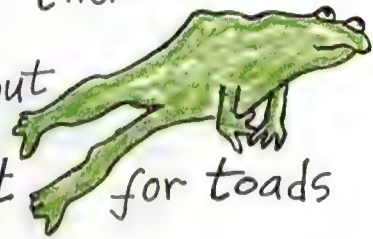
The grandmother, called a "gogo", helps to
take care of the children. Lots of
times they have a sleeping hut
all to themselves.



(Gogo and children sleep here)

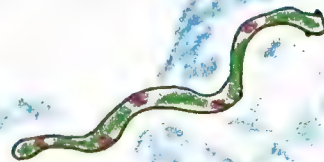
In Swaziland the earth is very red.
There are hardly any tarred roads or
sidewalks. Your shoes can be a real
mess! you can leave them outside
the door at night but
in the morning watch out for toads
hiding inside.

red earth →

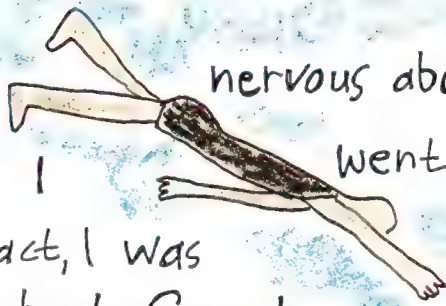


In the rivers and lakes there
are crocodiles, snakes and little
snails that make you very sick.
For swimming, you have to find
an old pool.

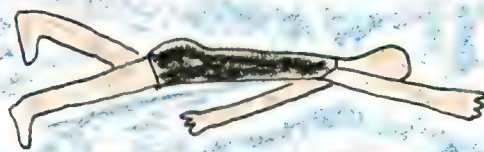
I really did learn to swim
in Swaziland in one of these
old pools. →



I was pretty nervous about swimming before I went to Swaziland. In fact, I was pretty nervous about Swaziland. But what I learned is this.



You should not be afraid of what you have never done. You can do all kinds of things you never dreamed you could do. Just like swimming. Just like writing a book. Just like living in Africa. ★



Meet the Author/Illustrator



Me and my two best friends, Duduzile and Liziwe, on the beach at the Indian Ocean.

Gems of the Gym

by Cindy Pearlman

SWOOSH! A girl leaps across the mat, twirling a long ribbon beside her. Snap! With a flick of her wrist the ribbon shimmers like a magic wand, and she casts a spell of excitement over the gym.

The girl is Natalie Lacuesta of the Rhythmic Gems. The Gems are a group of girls who gather in a gym in Evanston, Illinois, to practice rhythmic gymnastics. Rhythmic gymnastics is a bit like ballet, a bit like traditional gymnastics, and quite unlike anything you've seen before.

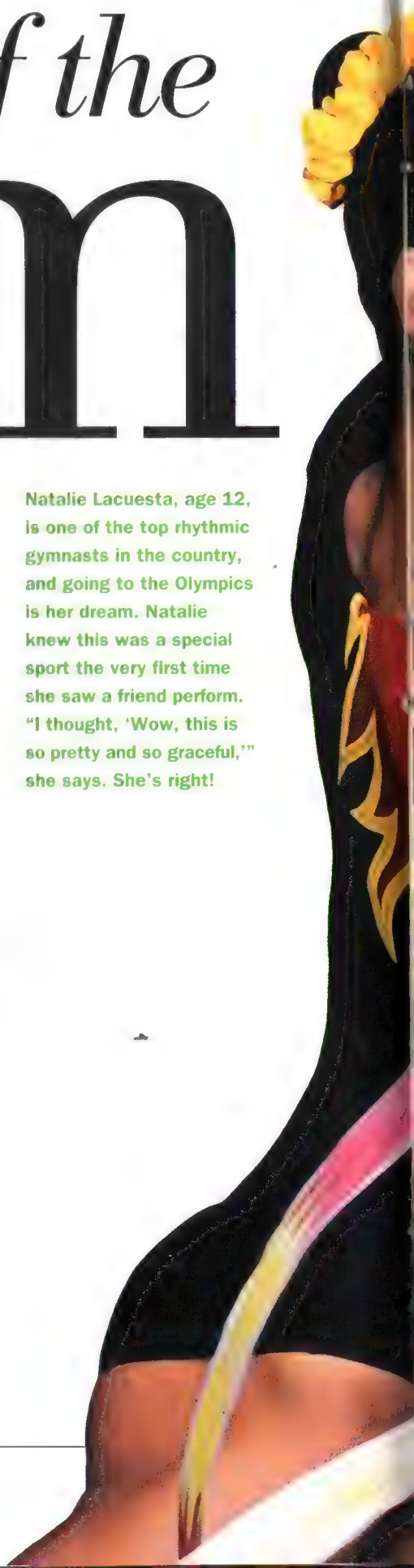
You won't find the Gems practicing on the balance beam or uneven bars. Instead, they work with objects called hand apparatus while they dance to music. There are five different kinds of apparatus: the ribbon, the ball, the clubs, the rope, and the hoop.

Some of the Gems, like Natalie, are star gymnasts who are training for the Olympics. Others are after-school athletes who come for fun and exercise. Either way, each of these Gems really sparkles at her sport!

Natalie Lacuesta, age 12, is one of the top rhythmic gymnasts in the country, and going to the Olympics is her dream. Natalie knew this was a special sport the very first time she saw a friend perform. "I thought, 'Wow, this is so pretty and so graceful,'" she says. She's right!



3. Who used to pretend she was a superhero?





RIBBON The ribbon is about 15 feet long and made out of satin. It's attached to a lightweight stick. Holding the stick, the girl twirls the ribbon in figure eights, spirals, and snakes. She may also toss the stick and catch it. The ribbon must always be in motion or the girl loses points in competition.

Rhythmic Gymnastics

In the late 1800s, men did exercises using clubs, balls, and other hand apparatus. By the 1900s, when this photo was taken, women and schoolgirls were using the equipment, too. Their movements were more graceful and flowing than the men's, and that's how rhythmic gymnastics began.



Photo: Library of Congress

CLUBS The clubs have long, narrow necks that make them look like skinny bowling pins. The gymnast swings the clubs in circles, arcs, and figure eights while she performs. Sometimes she taps the clubs against each other in time with the music. She can even toss the clubs high in the air—one at a time or both at once. Of course, she has to catch them, too!

"Sometimes you toss the clubs up and have to duck," says Devin Burrill, age 9. "Those things hurt if they hit you!" Devin joined the Rhythmic Gems when she was about five years old just to have fun and be with other girls.

But Devin loves working alongside the girls who are training to go to the Olympics. "It would be so neat if someone I knew took home the gold medal!" she says.





HOOP

The hoop is about three feet across and is made of wood or plastic. Sometimes the gymnast leaps through the hoop or tosses it up and catches it behind her back. She may also roll and spin the hoop on the ground—or even on parts of her body!

Girls have to watch their step when they practice the hoop. “The hoop is hard because it can trip you,” says Dawn Gingrich, age 10. Dawn first started doing rhythmic gymnastics two years ago. She thinks being a Gem is exciting even though she isn’t in it for the competition.

For Dawn, rhythmic gymnastics is a hobby, like playing the violin or the piano. “Since the pressure is off to go to the Olympics,” she says, “I can learn something new and just have fun.”



BALL What can you do with a plain old ball? Lots, it turns out! The gymnast balances the rubber ball on one hand, and throws it in the air and catches it. She may roll the ball on the floor or across her body. She can also bounce it in different rhythms.

The ball is one of the toughest events, says seven-year-old Angelica Jones: "It takes a lot of practice. Right now I'm practicing rolling the ball on my arms and catching it after I spin around." Sometimes the ball rolls off her arm and across the gym floor. "I hate it when that happens," she says.

Angelica knows a lot about rhythmic gymnastics because her aunt does the sport, too. Says Angelica: "I watched my Aunt Wendy's tapes and I decided that I *must* learn how to do this!"



Eleven-year-old Angela Pawlicki started rhythmic gymnastics when she was seven. She trains four to five hours a day and hopes to go to the Olympics someday. Although there's sometimes rivalry among the Gems, the girls are friends and they support one another during meets. Says Angela, "If a girl messes up and starts to cry, every single girl hovers around her and starts giving her hugs."

ROPE

The rope has no handles to hold on to—just one or two knots at each end. The gymnast jumps and leaps through the heavy rope. She throws it high and catches it. She may also fold the rope in half, then twirl it in circles and figure eights. ★



How to do the spiral

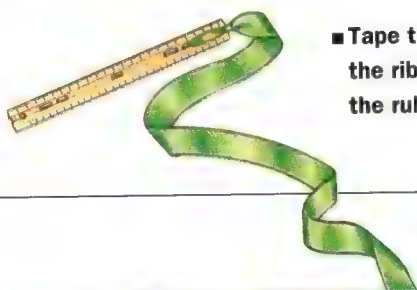
You can do this twirly ribbon move at home!

YOU WILL NEED:

- One satin ribbon, an inch and a half wide and 13 to 15 feet long
- One 12-inch plastic ruler with wide slots near both ends

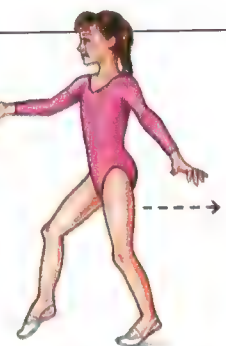
TO MAKE THE APPARATUS:

- Thread the ribbon through one of the slots in the ruler.
- Tie the ribbon in a tight knot at the top of the ruler.
- Tape the short end of the ribbon to the back of the ruler.



TO DO THE SPIRAL:

- 1** Start with the ruler at knee height, pointing forward.
- 2** Draw wide clockwise circles in the air, using your whole arm.
- 3** Repeat this motion four or five times and create a pretty pattern!



- 4** When you can do the move standing still, try it while running backward very slowly. The hand not holding the ruler should be held out from your side for balance. And don't forget to smile!

Craft

Melt Dad's Heart!


Don't buy Dad boring socks. Surprise him with really great rocks! These paperweights are fun, easy gifts to make for Father's Day.

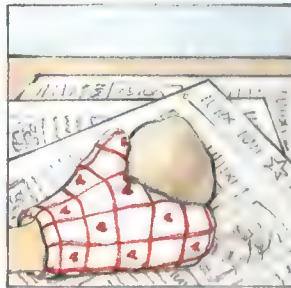
YOU WILL NEED


-  An adult to help you with the oven
- Smooth stones or rocks, about the size of your palm
- Crayons. Old, broken crayons are perfect.
- Cookie sheet covered with aluminum foil
- Pot holders
- Newspapers
- A soft rag

*Crafts by
Sally Seamans*



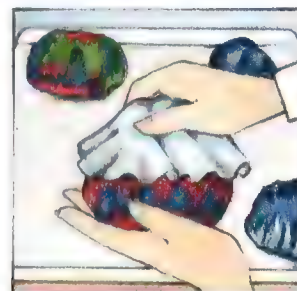
1  Wash and dry the rocks. Place them on a cookie sheet covered with aluminum foil. With an adult's help, put the cookie sheet into an oven set at 200 degrees. Let the stones "bake" for 2 hours. While you wait, cover the table with a thick layer of newspapers.



2  After 2 hours, ask an adult to take the cookie sheet out of the oven. Using a pot holder, place the rocks onto the newspaper. Always use a pot holder when touching the rocks. They won't burn you, but they're hot.



3 When you draw on the hot rocks with crayons, the wax will melt. To make designs, draw on the rocks right away. To draw pictures, like flowers or fish, let the rocks cool for about 5 minutes before you draw on them.

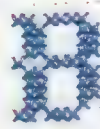
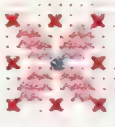


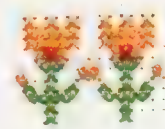


4 Put the finished rocks back on the cookie sheet. Let them cool overnight. The next day, polish each rock with a soft rag until it looks shiny. This will take a minute or two. Write Dad a special note, and your gift is ready to make his day!



Lessons I've Learned



 Be honest. Be fair.  Treat others with kindness
and respect. American moms are teaching
their daughters all sorts of lessons.

 And American girls are
listening!  Here are a few
of the lessons you've learned
from your moms. 





Treat others as you



People are more important than things.

Meghan Maguire, Age 11, Blue Bell, Pennsylvania



Express yourself!

Regan Cumming, Age 10, Fort Worth, Texas

Don't let people say you can't do something because you're a girl.

Stacy Garrett, Age 12, Rosenberg, Texas

Eat your veggies!

Beverly Nellinger, Age 13, Bensalem, Pennsylvania



Feel for other people.

Katie Wallace, Age 10, Brundidge, Alabama



Check your work.

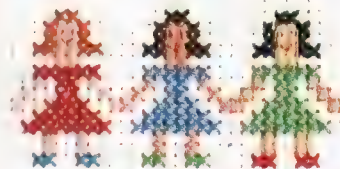
Monica Best, Age 10, Ellwood City, Pennsylvania

Don't talk to people when they're reading.

Amy Sue Nelson, Age 12, Orleans, Nebraska

You can have as many best friends as you want.

Carolynn Zebrowski, Age 11, Lavallett, New Jersey



Always have a sense of humor.

Elizabeth Austin, Age 10, Norwalk, Connecticut

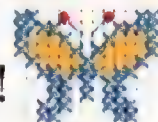


Don't grow up too fast.

Danielle Abbatiello, Age 12, Standish, Maine

Do what makes you happy. Don't always follow the crowd!

Shannon Medic, Age 11, Bolingbrook, Illinois



Respect people, plants, and animals.

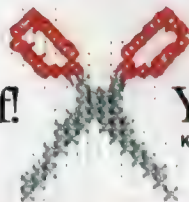
Monica Morgan-Dohner, Age 10, Hopkinsville, Kentucky

Tell people when you have a problem. Don't just keep it to yourself.

Natalie Bird, Age 12, Westchester, Ohio

Don't cut your hair by yourself!

Susie Granger, Age 11, South Milwaukee, Wisconsin



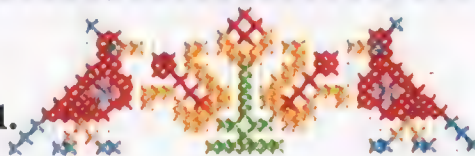
You get what you pay for.

Kristen McMullin, Age 10, Rathdrum, Idaho

would like to be treated.

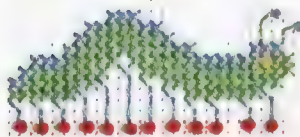
Listen to others, and they'll listen to you.

Tricia Petr, Age 11, Blue Rapids, Kansas



No matter how big or small the gift, it's the thought that counts.

Crystal Tatman, Age 11, Munroe Falls, Ohio



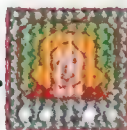
Don't bug Mom when she's on the phone!

Sarah Schactler, Age 8, Eatonville, Washington



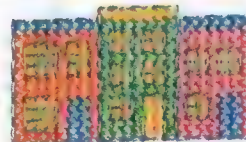
Don't sit too close to the T.V.

Nina Platts, Age 10, Gaithersburg, Maryland



Clean up what you messed up!

Katy Gerloff, Age 8, Virginia Beach, Virginia



Look around in different places to find your friends.

Liz Clark, Age 10, Snohomish, Washington

Stop and talk it out. Don't fight.

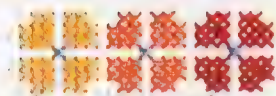
Amelia Kridler, Age 12, Athens, Ohio

It's  to make mistakes.

Amy Wrede, Age 9, Lincroft, New Jersey

Stand up for what you believe.

Katie Helkes, Age 11, Greeley, Colorado



Be creative!

Karissa Swanson, Age 12, Freeport, Illinois

Say "please" and "thank you."

Keri Manning, Age 11, Burnet, Texas

Learn how to



Erin Corrales-Diaz, Age 10, Port Orchard, Washington



Friends Forever

by Krystyna Poray Goddu



*All old dolls have stories to tell,
But most have kept their secrets well.
Except for a special few,
Whose tales were told by those who knew.*

by Dare Boles

Dolls have changed a lot over the years—but the ways girls play with them haven't changed much at all.



Once a posy little sister in 1704



Best friends in 1898



Going for a ride in the early 1940s



Sitting pretty in 1829



Look-alikes in 1861



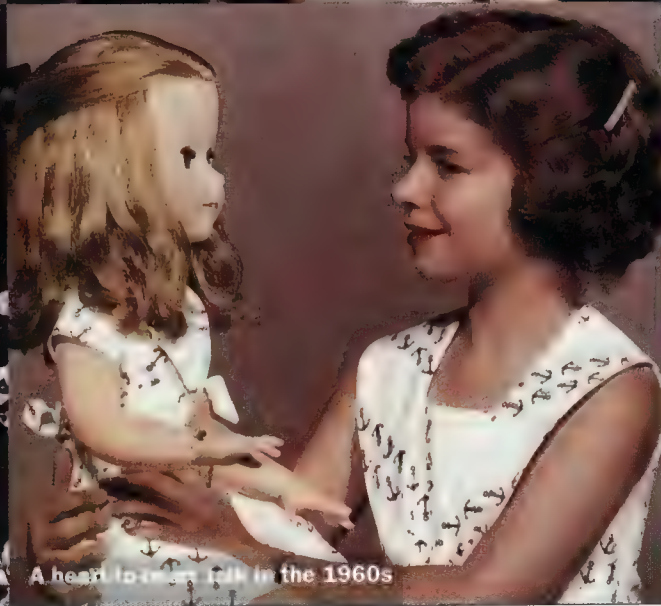
Double the fun around 1915



Cuddling a Patsy doll in the 1930s



Soaking up sunlight in the 1950s



A heart-to-heart talk in the 1960s



1770

Special Friends

Clarissa Field lived in Massachusetts during colonial days. She had lots of dolls with clever names, like Pingo and Palica. This doll is Bangwell Putt, Clarissa's favorite.

Look at Bangwell's large fingers. They are made from soft deerskin. Hands must have been important to Clarissa, who was born blind. She had to touch things to find out what they were like. Imagine Clarissa smoothing her doll's long soft fingers with her own.

Bangwell Putt's face is a mystery. Was the doll made without a face because Clarissa couldn't see? Or did the face wear off over time? We will never know.



1863

Secret Mission

This doll went on a secret mission with her owner—and it was no game of make-believe. The doll's name was Nina. The girl who owned Nina had an uncle who was a general in the Southern army during the Civil War.

The girl and the doll helped smuggle medicine to Southern troops behind enemy lines. The medicine was hidden inside Nina's head!

1863

Together Forever

In this painting Mary Ella Childs poses with her doll, Lilla. Mary Ella is shown wearing her best dress—and Lilla had one to match!

Today you can visit the doll Lilla at Memorial Hall Museum in Deerfield, Massachusetts. She is posed next to this painting.

Lilla's body is made from cloth. Her head and shoulders are made of shiny, delicate china. Mary Ella must have played with Lilla very, very carefully—

because you know what happens when you drop a china plate on the floor!





1898

Pretty Beads

If you were a Sioux Indian girl in the late 1800s, you wouldn't have played with baby dolls. Your dolls would've looked like little adults. Almost everything you did with them would have helped prepare you to be a grown-up.

The girl shown here is named Katie Roubideaux. A girl like Katie spent hours stitching tiny beads onto her doll's clothes. She practiced for the day when she would make clothing with fancy beaded designs for her own family.

Her first lesson might be to decorate her doll's dress with beads sewn in straight lines. As she got better, she would use more beads and more complicated patterns. She might even bead the bottoms of her doll's tiny moccasins.



1899

Playful Pen Pals

One hundred years ago two sisters named Muriel and Isabel Ashwell lived in New York City. Muriel had a doll named Edith. Isabel had a toy monkey. One of the sisters' favorite games was writing letters back and forth between their toys.

One time Isabel wrote to her sister's doll, inviting her for a stay in her bedroom. Isabel promised the doll a stupendous visit—but told Edith she could go home if she got homesick.

The game went on for many years, even as the girls grew older and busier with other activities.

Muriel kept Edith all her life. When she was 82 she donated Edith to the Museum of the City of New York—along with Edith's letters from the toy monkey.

1900

Family Portrait

Imagine having a doll that looks just like you! This doll named Thelma was made by Leo Moss, a craftsman who made dolls modeled after real children—many of whom were in his own family.

Mr. Moss carefully crafted the dolls' heads out of papier-mâché. Sometimes his wife even made wigs for the dolls from human hair—cut from the girls the dolls were made for!

Doll historians aren't sure just which girl was the model for Thelma. They do know that the doll remained in the Moss family until the early 1970s.



Thelma's hair was carefully molded into two cornrows, or braids.



1911

Precious Prize

When nine-year-old Margaret Dayton opened her mother's October issue of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, her eyes nearly popped out of her head! There she saw a beautiful doll with long golden curls and blue eyes. Above the picture was the headline: "Any Little Girl May Now Have the Real Daisy for Her Very Own."

Margaret wanted Daisy more than anything, but Daisy couldn't be bought—she had to be earned. To get the doll, a girl had to sell three subscriptions to

The Ladies' Home Journal. With some help from her relatives, Margaret sold the subscriptions and did earn her own Daisy doll.

Daisy came in the mail dressed in a simple cotton dress, lace stockings, and white slippers. Sewing patterns for other clothes were included.

Margaret and Daisy shared many happy days together. In fact, Margaret brushed Daisy's hair so much that she had to buy Daisy a new wig.



1950s to 1990s

Happy Family

Francesca Gilberti of New York City has a family full of Ginny dolls. Ginny dolls became popular more than 40 years ago, and they're still available today.

Francesca plays with three Ginny dolls: her mom's, her aunt's, and her own newer one. "I pretend the three Ginny's are sisters," she says. "My Ginny is the youngest sister, my aunt's is the middle sister, and my mom's Ginny is the oldest."

If Francesca has a daughter someday, that daughter might be able to play with four Ginny sisters! ★



Photo: John-Francis Bourke



Read on

Here are four great books about dolls:

Hitty: Her First Hundred Years by Rachel Field (1929).

A doll tells about her many adventures and many owners.

Miss Hickory by Carolyn Sherwin Bailey (1946). An apple-wood doll with a hickory-nut head fends for herself through a cold New Hampshire winter.

All-of-a-Sudden Susan by Elizabeth Coatsworth (1974). An antique doll helps a girl survive a flood.

Four Dolls by Rumer Godden (1984). Here are four magical stories about dolls and their owners.

The Giggle Gang



Dads in June and Moms in May—celebrate each special day!



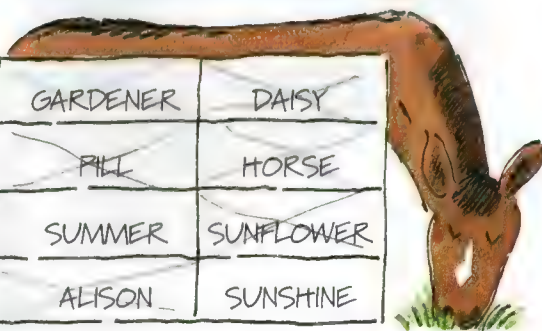
Cross-Outs

What warms your day and makes things grow?
The answer's hidden in the box below.
Follow the instructions on the right.
Then read what's left, and the answer's in sight!

1. Cross out three animals.
2. Cross out four jobs that people do.
3. Cross out five flowers.
4. Cross out two girls' names.
5. Cross out words made up of the three letters I, P, and L.



CAT	RAY	VIOLET	GARDENER	DAISY
ROSE	WRITER	OF	FILL	HORSE
TEACHER	LIP	RACCOON	SUMMER	SUNFLOWER
LILAC	LAWYER	EMILY	ALISON	SUNSHINE



All answers on page 36.

A herd of stampeding pickles. Jasmin Kaetzer How do you know which end of a worm is the head? You tickle it in the middle

The Giggle Gang

Oink! Oink! Oink!

Pig is a card game that's furiously fast and loads of fun. Here's how to play:



1. If there are four players, take all the aces, kings, queens, and jacks from a deck of cards. Set the rest of the deck aside. (To play with five girls add all the tens. With six girls add the nines, and so on.)



2. Shuffle the cards you've taken out. Deal four cards to each girl. The goal is for each player to try to collect four matching cards.



3. With this goal in mind, each girl selects a card she doesn't want from her hand. At the count of three, everyone says "pass" and slaps this card face-down to her right on the table.



4. Now each girl picks up the card on her left and adds it to her hand. Girls should keep saying "pass" and discarding as fast as they can!



5. As soon as one girl gets four cards that match, she stops passing cards around and silently touches one finger to the tip of her nose.



6. As soon as the other players see what she's doing, each should touch her own nose. The last girl to touch her nose gets a "P."



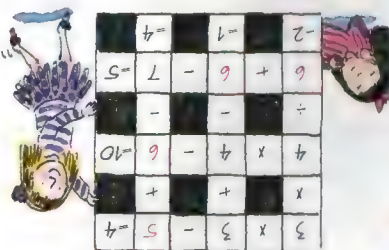
7. Then deal and begin the game again. When someone loses three times she gets the letters "P-I-G." She has to say "Oink!" three times, and she's out.



Try it. Oink! You'll like it!

Answer Box

Cross-Outs: Rays of summer sunshine
Ag Code: Catch the June "bug":
summer fever!
You'll find the buzzword, stupendous,
on page 32.
Find-It 1: page 15 Find-It 5: page 4
Find-It 2: page 30 Find-It 6: page 5
Find-It 3: page 45 Find-It 7: paper doll
Find-It 4: Samantha play, first page



Matharama:



From Spring to Summer:

Why did the man put a radio in the refrigerator? To hear cool music.

Anybody?

Why'd the man take two pairs of shorts to play golf? In case he got a hole in one.

Kristy Huysman

Age 9, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

What is the difference between a famous ballerina and a duck? One goes quick on her beautiful legs.

The other goes quack on her beautiful eggs. Emma Rose Niedermeyer

Age 13, Eugene, Oregon

Cashley Evans

Age 11, Fort Lauderdale, Florida

TIPS FOR PLAYERS

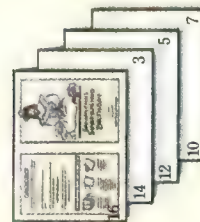
- Stay in character even when you're not speaking. Listen to the other characters. If you forget your line, say what you think your character would say.
- Speak slowly and clearly. Don't turn your back to the audience.
- Act and speak at the same time. Some directions tell you to do things as you are speaking. For example:

SAMANTHA: (twirls) Thank you!

Other directions suggest how to say a line. For example:

AGNES: (happily) There were some really big puddles on the way here.

HOW TO MAKE YOUR SCRIPT BOOK



1. Tear out the pages along the dotted lines. Stack the pages on top of each other in the order shown above, with this page on top.



2. Fold the stack of pages in half along the solid line in the center. Run your fingernail down the folded edge to help the pages lie flat. Check to be sure they are in the right order.



3. Put three staples close to the fold, and you're done!

SAMANTHA'S SURPRISING BIRTHDAY

A PLAY

~ 1904 ~

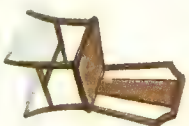
BY VALERIE TRIPP

ILLUSTRATED BY LUANN ROBERTS SMITH



YOU WILL NEED

THE SET You will need a **table** and a **sturdy chair**. Decorate the table for a party if you wish.

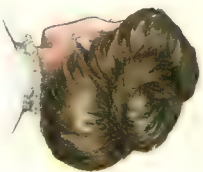


THE PROPS You'll need **24 pink ribbons** or **crepe paper streamers**. Each one should be about four feet long. You'll also need **12 boxes**. Put two ribbons or streamers in each box and then put **wrapping paper** on it.



Don't make it too hard to open the box. You'll also need a **plate of cookies** and an **umbrella**.

THE COSTUMES You'll need **matching dresses** and **hair bows** for Agnes and Agatha, so they will look like twins. **Long skirts** and **upswept hairdos** will help Cornelia and Grandmary look grown-up. It would be a good idea if Samantha, Nellie, Bridget, and Jenny wore **dresses** and **hair bows of different colors** so the audience can tell them apart easily.



upswept hairdo

THE CAST You'll need at least **six actresses**. There are eight roles in the play, but if you don't have eight actresses, don't worry. The girls playing Grandmary and Cornelia can also play Agnes and Agatha. They should wear their long skirts over their Agnes and Agatha costumes so they can change quickly.



EVERYONE: Hurray! It's a Maypole!

(The happy girls skip around Samantha, intertwining their ribbons and singing loudly.)

EVERYONE: Happy birthday to you, happy birthday to you!
Happy birthday, dear Samantha! Happy birthday to you!

(When the girls are finished, they clap and cheer. Samantha jumps off her chair, and all actresses line up and curtsy. After the applause, Samantha may invite the audience to have party refreshments with the actresses.) ★



JENNY: (*crying*) That was the first present I ever bought for anybody, and it was a terrible present.

SAMANTHA: Jenny, Jenny! Don't cry! Your present wasn't terrible. It was a very nice present. I like it. I like all the ribbons.

AGATHA: Well, it's a good thing you like them, because you sure have enough of them! I've never seen so many pink ribbons in my life!



AGNES: What on earth are you going to do with them all?

(*Samantha looks around at all the ribbons. She is at a loss. Then she has an idea.*)

SAMANTHA: Well, I . . . Well, I could . . . Let me see . . . Wait! I have an idea! I know what we can do with all these ribbons.

(*Samantha climbs up on a chair, holding one end of each ribbon in her hands.*)

SAMANTHA: Quick, everybody take two ribbons.

(*Each girl holds the end of a ribbon in each hand. As they stand, they form a circle around Samantha, and surprise! It's a Maypole!*)

SAMANTHA: (*triumphant*) You see? We've made a Maypole!

CHARACTERS



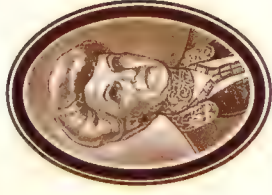
SAMANTHA
An eleven-year-old orphan who lives with her Aunt Cornelia and Uncle Gard



AUNT CORNELIA
Samantha's loving young aunt



NELLIE
Samantha's best friend, who, with her two sisters, has been adopted by Aunt Cornelia and Uncle Gard



GRANDMARY
Samantha's grandmother, who wants her to be a young lady



JENNY, BRIDGET
Nellie's little sisters, who are seven and eight



AGATHA, AGNES
Cornelia's lively eleven-year-old sisters, who are twins

SAMANTHA'S SURPRISING BIRTHDAY



Scene: The parlor of Uncle Gard and Aunt Cornelia's elegant town house in New York City on the rainy afternoon of May 26, 1906.

(Samantha and Cornelia ENTER. They run in, breathless. Samantha carries a plate of cookies, and Cornelia carries six small gift boxes. As they talk, they arrange the party table and decorate the room.)

SAMANTHA: Phew! We just made it.

CORNELIA: The rain is really coming down hard now. I'm sorry we can't have your birthday party outside in the garden, Samantha. But if we did we'd have to ask your guests to sit in mud puddles.

AGNES: *(sighs)* Just go ahead and open the presents from Agatha and me at the same time.

AGATHA: Yes, and you don't have to try to say anything nice. *(Samantha unwraps the gift boxes from Agnes and Agatha and lifts the two lids at once. Sure enough, she pulls out four more pink hair ribbons, exactly like the others.)*

EVERYONE: *(groans)* Not again!

AGNES: Great Caesar's ghost! No one can use this many hair ribbons, not even Samantha! After all, she has only one head!

NELLIE: Quick, open your presents from Grandmama and Cornelia. Surely they will be different.

SAMANTHA: That's a good idea. Here, Nellie, you open this one.

(Samantha hands Nellie one of the boxes. The girls open the boxes at the same moment, and pull out more pink hair ribbons, exactly the same as all the rest. The stage is awash in pink ribbons. The guests slump in despair.)

EVERYONE: *(sighs)* Oh, no!

AGNES: That does it!

AGATHA: It's another birthday disaster!

NELLIE: Oh, Samantha! Your birthday is turning out to be very disappointing! First the rain spoiled the Maypole, and then you only got one present, over and over again.

SAMANTHA: Me, too! I'll open Jenny's first, because she's the youngest.

(Samantha quickly opens Jenny's box. She pulls out two pink hair ribbons. They are exactly like the party favors. Nobody looks very pleased, except Jenny and Samantha.)



SAMANTHA: Thank you, Jenny. Now I have pink hair ribbons, too, just like all of you. Shall I open your present next, Bridget?

BRIDGET: *(noticeably less enthusiastic than before)* Yes, I guess so.

(Samantha opens Bridget's box and pulls out two pink hair ribbons, exactly like the others. Samantha has to think what to say.)

SAMANTHA: Oh! Well! Um . . . These are very pretty. Thank you! Now I'll open your present, Nellie.

NELLIE: I'm beginning to think maybe my present won't be so useful after all.

(Samantha opens Nellie's box and pulls out two more pink hair ribbons, exactly like the others.)

SAMANTHA: *(quickly)* Thank you very much, Nellie. These will be very useful. I'm glad to have extras, in case some get lost.

SAMANTHA: I don't think Agnes and Agatha would mind, but I'm sure Grandmary would say it was most improper.

CORNELIA: Yes, indeed! Especially for young ladies wearing their best party dresses. You do look beautiful, Samantha.

SAMANTHA: *(twirls)* Thank you!

CORNELIA: We'll make the room look beautiful, too. Your party will be just as much fun inside as it would have been outside.

SAMANTHA: Yes! We can do everything but dance around the Maypole. We can't bring *that* inside.

CORNELIA: No, I'm afraid not. But your birthday is in May every year, Sam. Maybe next year it will be sunny and you can have a Maypole.

SAMANTHA: I hope so. It's fun to wrap the ribbons around it. It's sort of like tying a bow on a giant gift.

CORNELIA: Oh, that reminds me! Here is a little gift for you from your Uncle Gard and me.

(Cornelia hands Samantha one of the gift boxes.)

SAMANTHA: Thank you, Aunt Cornelia. May I open it now?

CORNELIA: Of course!

(But before Samantha opens the gift, Grandmary ENTERS. She carries a wet umbrella and a gift box.)

GRANDMARY: Happy birthday, dear girl!

SAMANTHA: Oh, Grandmary! I'm so glad you're here!

(Grandmary and Samantha hug.)

GRANDMARY: Nothing could stop me, not even this most unpromising weather. Good gracious, I can hardly believe you are eleven years old today! Already a young lady! Here is a birthday gift. I hope it didn't get too wet.



SAMANTHA: Thank you, Grandmary. It looks lovely.

GRANDMARY: *(laughs)* I am sure I don't look lovely. I am sure I look a bedraggled mess!

CORNELIA: Come with me, Grandmary. I'll bring you a nice hot cup of tea while you freshen up.

GRANDMARY: Thank you, Cornelia. Tea is just what I need.

(Grandmary and Cornelia EXIT.)

(Samantha puts the presents from Grandmary and Cornelia on the table. She does not see Nellie, Bridget, and Jenny ENTER on tiptoe, carrying gift boxes.)

NELLIE, BRIDGET, and JENNY: *(loudly)* Happy birthday, Samantha!



SAMANTHA: These will cheer you up. Go on, open them!

BRIDGET: Our party favors!

(The five girls open their boxes simultaneously. Each girl pulls two long pink ribbons out of her box.)

EVERYONE: Oooooohhhh, pink hair ribbons! They're beautiful!

NELLIE: Thank you, Samantha!

EVERYONE: Yes, thank you!

SAMANTHA: You are welcome!

(Jenny gets her gift box and puts it in Samantha's lap.)

JENNY: Now you open our presents, Samantha. Here, open mine first.

(Agnes and Agatha put their boxes next to Samantha. Bridget and Nellie get their boxes and the boxes from Cornelia and Grandmary from the table and put them next to Samantha.)

AGNES: Yes! Now it's your turn. I can't wait for you to open my present. I know you'll love it. My present is the best.

NELLIE: Mine's the most useful!

BRIDGET: Mine's the prettiest!

JENNY: Mine's something I know you like!

AGATHA: Hurry up. I'm dying to see what everyone has given you.

EVERYONE: Me, too!

SAMANTHA: *(laughs)* Oh, you surprised me!

JENNY: *(thrusting her gift into Samantha's hands)* And we have more surprises, too. Look, Samantha. I have a present for you. I chose it myself and bought it myself and wrapped it myself. Please open it now.

BRIDGET: *(elbowing in front of Jenny)* No, Jenny. I want Samantha to open my present first. Please!

SAMANTHA: Oh, Bridget and Jenny, both your presents look lovely! I can't wait to see what's inside. But it wouldn't be polite to open them before Agnes and Agatha get here. Would it, Nellie?

NELLIE: No. We don't want to spoil the surprise for them.

JENNY: Well, you could unwrap my present and see what it is and then you could wrap it up again and open it again when Agnes and Agatha get here. How would that be?

(Samantha and Nellie exchange a smile but do not laugh at Jenny. Samantha hugs Jenny, then puts the presents from Bridget and Jenny on the party table.)

SAMANTHA: I couldn't wrap it as nicely as you did. I think we'd better wait. I'll put the presents on the table here, with the party favors.

BRIDGET: Are those party favors for us?

SAMANTHA: Yes. One for you, one for Nellie, one for Jenny, one for Agnes, and one for Agatha.

JENNY: Oooh! Can I open mine now and see what it is and then wrap it again and then—

NELLIE: (*breaking in, kindly*) No, silly!

SAMANTHA: They're all the same thing, so you'll have to open them all at the same time.

JENNY: Oh, I can't wait till Agnes and Agatha get here!

BRIDGET: I can't either. I didn't know birthdays had so many nice surprises in them.

(*Just as Bridget says "surprises" Agnes and Agatha pop out, shoes and stockings in one hand, gift boxes in the other hand.*)

AGNES and AGATHA: (*shout*) Surprise! Here we are!

SAMANTHA: Hello, Agnes! Hello, Agatha!

JENNY: Hurray! You're here! Now the party can start!

NELLIE: How come you're carrying your shoes and stockings?



(*Agnes and Agatha exchange a mischievous look. They sit on the floor and put on their shoes and stockings as they talk. The other girls sit on the floor, too.*)

AGNES: Well, we just couldn't resist...

AGATHA: We took our shoes and stockings off and walked barefoot through the puddles.

AGNES: (*happily*) There were some really big puddles on the way here.

AGATHA: (*with relish*) It's practically a hurricane out there! The rain is pouring down and the wind is blowing hard.



AGNES: You are lucky, Samantha. Your birthday is never dull. This year it's hurricaning, and last year that boy Eddie Ryland put salt in the ice cream—

EVERYONE: Eeeewwwww!

AGATHA: Every year something surprising happens on your birthday.

AGNES: Yes, there is always some great—

SAMANTHA: (*breaking in, laughing*) Disaster.

NELLIE: (*explaining to Agnes and Agatha*) We put up a beautiful Maypole in the garden. We were supposed to dance around it at the party today. But now the rain has ruined it.

AGATHA: Oh, that's too bad. I love dancing around the Maypole.

EVERYONE: (*sadly*) Me, too.

(*Gloom descends. Then Samantha gets up, scoops the five party favor gift boxes off the table, and hands one to each girl.*)

Who's That Girl?

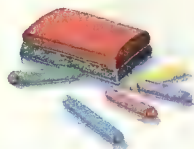
Here's an American girl of yesterday. Read the clues about her and guess who she became when she grew up.

6. Who did Alexis' bear meet in Japan?



Clue 1

I grew up on a farm in Monticello, Georgia. The town was so small everyone knew everyone else. We had cows, pigs, cats—and *six* dogs.



Clue 2

My mother taught third grade at my school. My best friend's mom taught second grade. After school my friend and I had to wait for our moms, but we didn't mind. We had the run of their classrooms and we'd play games on the chalkboard.



Clue 3

When I was nine years old I started taking piano, but I didn't like to practice. Instead, I'd just "wing it." I'd pretend I'd practiced and see if I could fool my teacher. Sometimes I did!

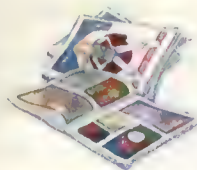


Clue 4

I sang in the chorus at school, and when I was in fifth grade I played Dorothy in the school play, *Christmas in Oz*. I got to wear the ruby-red slippers. That was just the best!



Me at age 7 in 1972



Clue 5

My older sister and I loved to play make-believe. One of our favorite games was to pretend that we were superheroes.

Take a guess!

When she grew up, this American girl became:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> a veterinarian | <input type="checkbox"/> a country singer |
| <input type="checkbox"/> a college president | <input type="checkbox"/> an actress |

Turn the page and find out if you're right!

She's Trisha Yearwood

Today the girl who grew up on a small farm in Georgia is famous for performing country music all over the world. You may hear her on the radio singing "The Song Remembers When" or "She's in Love with the Boy." Or you may see her on the Disney Channel in her own concert special.

After playing Dorothy in the school play, Trisha Yearwood knew she liked to be in the spotlight. "That was when I realized I loved to get up in front of people and perform," she says. And while she may have tried to fool her piano teacher, Trisha took

her schoolteachers pretty seriously—and not just because her mom was one of them. She's glad now that she studied hard in school.

"A lot of people in music don't think your education is important," she says. "But even though I didn't have to show my diploma when I got my record deal, I think knowledge is one of the best things

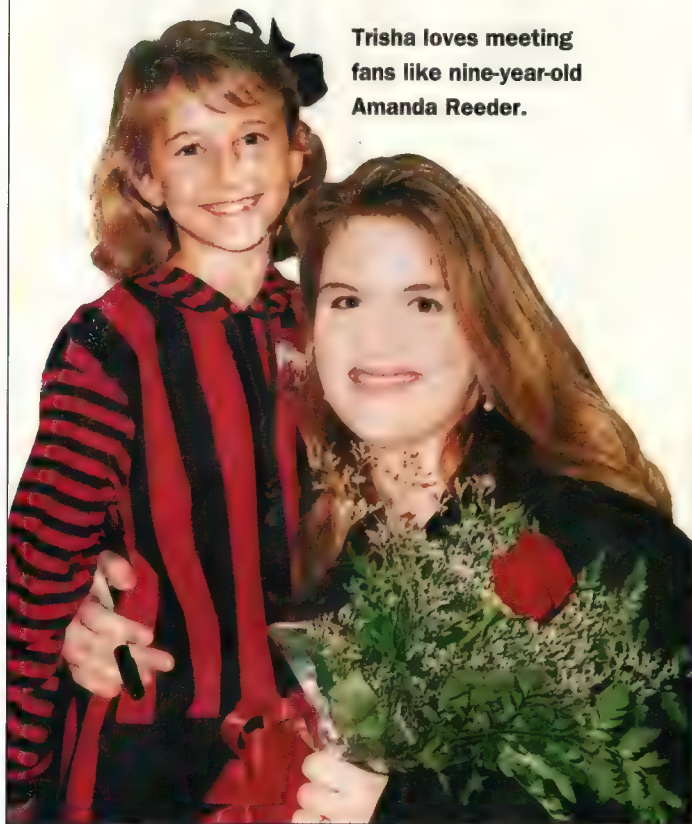


For Trisha, making music is a dream come true.

you can give yourself. Learning as much as you can is going to help you in ways you might not know."

Trisha is happy that her dreams came true. "I'm lucky, because I got to do what I always wanted to do," she says. "I never had to settle for my second choice." ★

Trisha loves meeting fans like nine-year-old Amanda Reeder.



Trisha's advice to American girls:

"Don't set limits for yourself. No dream is too farfetched. *Somebody* out there has to be a country-music star. *Somebody* has to be President. There are things that may seem out of reach, but you can do them!"

Trisha Yearwood

HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I am nine years old and still afraid of the dark. I read less horror books and watch less scary shows than before, but it doesn't help. I told my mom, but she just tells me to go back to sleep. I even build a fortress around me with my stuffed animals every night. I can't think of anything else to do.

Can you help me?

Scared Stiff

Ask your parents if you can sleep with a flashlight. When you get really scared, shine the light around your room, quietly saying the name of everything you see: "There's my closet. There's my doll. There's my book." The sound of your own voice and the sight of familiar things will calm you down. You'll soon discover that your mind is stronger than your fears.



Dear American Girl,

I'm having a very hard time finding my talents. I feel like I'm not good at anything. It's really rough.

Good for nothing



Don't expect to be great at something the first time you try it. A big talent usually starts small. Decide what you really want to be good at and then work at it, whether it's playing the French horn or making a great science project. Go at your own pace, and don't get hung up worrying about whether you're better or worse than other kids. Remember, too, that there are lots of ways to be talented. Ask someone who loves you what your special gifts are. You may be happily surprised!



Dear American Girl,

My parents are divorced. My dad's always saying mean things about my mom and trying to be the best.

Confused

Your dad is wrong to do this.

Don't get into an argument over whether what he's saying about your mom is true. Instead, the next time he says something mean about her, tell him his words are hurting you. Tell him you love him, but let him know that if he loves you, he should be more considerate of how you feel.



Dear American Girl,

A girl that I never play with invited me to her birthday. I said I could go, but I didn't want to! I'm in sixth grade, while the other girl is in third. She is so happy that I'm coming! I don't want to go, but I don't want to hurt her feelings!

Reluctant Guest

If you said you would go, you should do it. A girl should be true to her word, and you'll feel better about yourself if you do what you know is right. Next time you want to say no to an invitation, say you need to check with your parents. That will give you time to find a nice way to say you can't go.



MORE HELP!

Dear American Girl,

I just found out that one of my only friends is stealing from me. I saw my missing things at her house, and she's told me two different lies about them. Now I'm afraid to have her over at my house. What should I do?

AGirl in Utah

A friend who steals from you and then lies to your face isn't much of a friend. Tell this girl you won't be friends with someone you can't trust. Don't ask her over again, and don't go to her house, either.



Dear American Girl,

I'm the middle child, and sometimes I feel like my family doesn't care about me. What do I do? I can't tell my parents.

Meg

Are you sure? Try! They may have no idea that you feel left out. Give your parents a chance to do something about it. You can do something, too, by finding opportunities to talk with your mom and dad. If your dad is washing dishes alone, go out to the kitchen, grab a towel, and start drying. Same



with your mom. It will let them know how serious you are about wanting to feel included. And the talks you have while you work will make you feel very special.



Dear American Girl,

My friend always hangs around with my older sister when she's at my house. She acts like she likes my sister more than she likes me.

Jealous

It's natural for your friend to be interested in your sister, especially if she doesn't have an older sister herself. Try talking to your sister about the problem. Ask if she would nicely excuse herself from your games when your friend

is around. If that doesn't work, see if you can't play over at your friend's house more often.



Advice from You

"Sometimes when I have tons of chores and homework to do, I get mad and complain. Then I remember this great trick: *Insist* on thinking only good thoughts, like 'This job will only take a moment' or 'I can do this!' Be *determined* to smile and be happy, since there are lots of people who have it worse than you do! Thinking pleasant thoughts will make the bad ones vanish, and people will like you better if you're cheerful."

**J. Rose Barker
Age 13, Sacramento,
California**

7. What kind of gorilla does Brienne want to be when she grows up?

Need advice? Write:

HELP!

American Girl

**8400 Fairway Place
Middleton, WI 53562**



May Day, Central Park, by Maurice Prendergast, 1901

Imagine You have a circle of flowers in your hair.

It's May 1, 1901. You're in Central Park, the big green park in the heart of New York City. Here thousands of girls have gathered for May Day parties, held to celebrate the coming of spring.

Your own party begins with a parade of girls holding baskets of flowers, colorful hoops, banners, flags, and Maypoles. Then a call goes out: "Silence! Make way for the Queen of the May!" One lucky girl, chosen long ago, steps forward to be wreathed with flowers by her friends. How you wish it were you!

But there's no time to think about *that*. You and the other girls must entertain the Queen by dancing the Maypole. One girl holds the pole. Others catch hold of streamers—and the dance begins. You face to the right, skip to the left, skip to the right. As you dance, you sing, and the ribbons wind around the pole. Your throat fills with laughter. Your feet skim the grass. The lawn becomes a jumble of hats and dresses, and the Queen disappears in the crowd. Poor Queen! She can only watch! ★



American Girl

Coming up in the July/August issue

Ride 'Em, Cowgirls!

Two rip-roarin' sisters at the
Little Britches Rodeo

Return to Camp Gowonagin

A Molly story by Valerie Tripp

Grab Your Bug Spray!

American Girl is going to camp,
and you can come, too

Hip Hip Hurrah!

For the winners of the
American Girl story contest

Summer Snapshots

It's a day in the life of American girls

Plus:

Make your own rubber stamps,
and your pop-out paper doll #11